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programmes and courses of study in colleges and clubs suggest the accumulation of social and spiritual forces throughout the world of thought, that make for a re-examination of the grounds of belief and of conduct, and for a more intelligent philosophy of human history.

G. H. C.

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THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY. Part I, The Acts of the Apostles. Edited by F. J. Foakes-Jackson, D.D., and Kirsopp Lake, D.D., Vol. I, Prolegomena I : The Jewish, Gentile and Christian Backgrounds. London : Macmillan and Company. 1920. Pp. viii, 480.

This is the first volume of three. It is historical in character, dealing with the Jewish, Gentile and Christian life, thought and religion, as a background for the later study of the book of Acts, first in its literary phenomena, and then, finally, in its actual text. In other words, the first two volumes will constitute an introduction telling about the Book of Acts, while the third volume will contain the text, with its translation and exposition. This volume is dedicated to Professor George Foot Moore, of Harvard, to whose phenomenal learning and unfailing kindness to all co-workers a well-deserved tribute is paid in the Preface. Other scholars have contributed articles on special fields, notable among which is the contribution of Professor Clifford H. Moore, also of Harvard, on *Life in the Roman Empire at the Beginning of the Christian Era*. For fairness's sake the editors secured the co-operation of a Jew, Claude G. Montefiori, in dealing with *The Spirit of Judaism*. He presents, of course, the very best side of Judaism, but strives to be fair in his treatment, and especially in dealing with the representations regarding the spirit of the leaders of Judaism in the time of Christ contained in the writings of the New Testament. So he says of the Jewish teaching of that time (p. 41 f.):—

“We find the view constantly repeated that Israel's lesser sins are carefully and fully punished in this world in order that it may receive the full beatitude of the world to come, while the minor and occasional virtues of the heathen are fully and carefully recompensed here in order that they may suffer more hereafter.”

And again:—

“National and religious prejudice prevented the free development of the conception of the completely impartial God. Israel is oppressed by the heathen; and reacts humanly towards the oppressor. He cannot pay him back in deed; he can only pay him back in words and theory. God also partakes of the infirmities of His people; and, in the days to come, He will repay to the nations what His people have suffered at their hands.” (p. 46).

So, also, he recognizes the need of a new canon of Scripture which the Christian created in the New Testament:—

“When I read any early document, such as the *Mechilta*, I feel as if one advantage of Christianity over Judaism was that it made a fresh start . . . it created an extra sacred canon of its own. . . The Old Testament goes back so far in time, it is so varied, so bulky! . . . one sees the burden of it in Judaism. ‘Ye search the Scriptures.’ Well might Jesus say this! They were searched and known all too thoroughly! For the Old Testament contains not only supreme and imperishable verities but also much that was, in very sooth, already obsolete even long before A.D. 50. In other words, it was inconsistent with itself.” (p. 3 f.).

But, on the other hand, it was all of it “perfect and inspired”. Hence the quibbles of Rabbinic interpretation, hence the exaltation at times of the temporal over the eternal, and those accommodations of the Law which made moral precepts of no effect.

The book is a thesaurus of erudition and of doubts. One rises from its perusal with grave uncertainty whether anything is really known about anything. To some extent it is typical of a critical treatment common, especially, in the field of Bible study, which, putting the work or document studied on the defensive, then seems to accept the testimony of any witness which can possibly be subpoenaed against it, rather than its own evidence. It was by this method of treatment that a former generation of critics condemned Acts as a liar and an impersonator, pretending to be written by Luke when it was not, and bearing false witness to events and conditions of an earlier period.

The pendulum has now swung far in the other direction, not only for the date, credibility and authorship of Acts, but of all or almost all of the books of the New Testament. This volume however, does not seem to have swung with it. Its implications are the other way, but they are, so far as Acts is concerned, implications rather than statements, for which we must presumably await succeeding volumes. When it comes to *The Teaching of Jesus*, and *The Development of Thought on the Spirit, the Church and Baptism*, contained in Part III of this volume, *Primitive Christianity*, we have the author's complete conclusions. I will venture to say that no one could recognize Jesus from the former of these chapters, as no one could recognize a plant from the botanical description alone. The color-plate which is essential to the understanding is wanting. The resulting idea is false and misleading. I do not believe that the conception it calls up in my mind is that which the authors would wish to convey, and therefore I shall not try to criticize it.

The book is valuable to the man who needs to be stirred up to think and question. It makes one realize the limitations of our certain knowledge, and the uncertainties that beset us. In general, it is the opposite of constructive in its form and method.

I had marked for note a few small matters of inaccuracy or carelessness, but they are very insignificant and may well be omitted. I could wish that the editors had not used the German form of the Hebrew sacrosanct divine name, *Jahveh*, which is misleading and erroneous. The pronunciation is *Yahweh*, or *Yahaweh*, and one of these spellings should have been used in a book written in English for English-speaking readers.

J. P. P.

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A CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS. By Ernest DeWitt Burton, Professor of New Testament Interpretation in the University of Chicago. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1920. Pp. lxxxix, 541.

Slowly the great International Critical Commentary on the books of both the Old and the New Testament nears completion. The original editors have passed away, and some of the